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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 46/167 of 19 December 1991 on women, environment, population and sustainable development, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in the report on effective mobilization and integration of women in development, to be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session, a section on the role of women in environment and sustainable development.

2. The present report analyses the role of gender in environment and sustainable development. The overall objective of the report is to illustrate how gender concerns should be incorporated in the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. 1/ The report contains an analysis of the role of women in Agenda 21 and gives concrete illustrations and suggestions on how to include gender analysis in the development of policies and programmes for sustainable development and the monitoring of Agenda 21. It draws on the preparations for priority themes on development for the Commission on the Status of Women, the preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development, and the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, which will include the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, to be completed in 1994, and the platform for action for the Conference.

3. The term sustainable development brings together two strands of thought about the management of human activities: one concentrating on development goals, the other on controlling or limiting the harmful impacts of human activities on the environment in order to meet, as expressed in the report of the Brundtland Commission, "the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". 2/ It is important to stress that, in any discussion of sustainable development, development goals should be as important as ecological sustainability. However, meeting economic, social and political goals obviously has to be sustainable in an ecological sense since human life and well-being depend on this.

4. Within the United Nations system there is a renewed consensus that in order to achieve sustainable development effective mobilization and integration of women are essential.

II. WOMEN IN AGENDA 21: A GENDER ANALYSIS

A. Gender analysis and effective mobilization and integration of women in development

5. In dealing with the effective mobilization and integration of women in development, two different approaches have historically been followed. One has been to see women as an important group in society and to deal with them separately. The other has been to seek to incorporate references to women in strategies where their concerns are perceived to be relevant. The latter approach has been termed "mainstreaming". Often both approaches have been used. In practice, the two have been perceived as counterbalancing. Mainstreaming has been seen to involve a danger that women's concerns will be overwhelmed by a

sense that development is gender-neutral and that in practice, therefore, paying particular attention to women in policy-making is irrelevant. Mainstreaming may imply a risk of disappearing in the stream. A counterbalance has been to articulate women's concerns in a comprehensive and visible way as an addendum to strategies, which, however, implies a risk that women in development will be seen as a separate, isolated phenomenon and may give such a strategy a welfare-orientation. It implies that mobilizing women for development as a separate activity is a form of charity.

6. As was noted in the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/46/464), effective mobilization and integration of women in development cannot be an exercise whereby women are introduced as separate components of plans and programmes. Nor is the "mainstreaming" of women's issues in economy-wide policies limited to the design of compensatory programmes aiming at alleviating unexpected negative effects. Rather, recognizing the behaviour of women as agents of social and economic development should be an integral part of the design of policies aiming at affecting the functioning of the entire economy. This constitutes a formidable challenge for policy makers and also for workers in the field of women in development.

7. Over the past few years, a different approach has begun to be articulated to express the mobilization and integration of women in development; it has been termed "gender analysis" and involves seeing development processes through what is termed a "gender lens". The basis of the analysis 3/ is to examine how gender relations, defined as the relative positions in society of men and women, affect their ability to participate in development. These positions are defined by the socially constructed and culturally variable roles that women and men play in their daily lives.

8. At the heart of this definition of roles is a sexual division of labour around what are termed the "productive" and "reproductive" functions of society. The productive function has to do with the way societies produce goods and services and has historically been assigned economic value in most development paradigms. The reproductive function, in contrast, has to do with how a society reproduces itself over generations and maintains its coherence; it involves such diverse activities as child rearing, socialization, care for the elderly and the disabled, and community activities that reinforce societal solidarity. This function has historically been left out of economic calculations.

9. While neither function is the exclusive preserve of either sex and men and women perform both functions, in practice women have been assumed in modern societies by tradition and culture to be responsible for the reproductive function, while men have been assumed to be responsible for the productive. The assignment of monetary or economic value to the roles dedicated to the productive function has led to the creation of a structural relationship of inequality, the reproductive function having been assigned no economic value.

10. A gender approach, which looks at the underlying roles and functions of both sexes and their value to society, rather than at women in isolation, provides a basis for challenging conventional approaches to development with a view to creating a more sustainable development paradigm. In the gender approach it is recognizing that although economic development may be possible without raising the status of women, sustainable development is not. Gender as

a structural relationship between women and men is manifested in inequality in labour markets, political structures and the household, and is reinforced by custom, law and specific development policies. 4/ Gender analysis is the systematic effort to document and understand the relative situations of men and women within a given context, for example, the impact of economic and social policies. A gender-aware approach examines the social relationship between women and men in order to identify existing obstacles, which may open up new cultural, social and economic dimensions that may otherwise be overlooked.

11. Political, social or economic institutions or policies, programmes and projects are not gender-neutral, even if planned and implemented as though they were. In fact, they may even reproduce unequal gender structures by preserving existing gender roles. Efforts to integrate women in development have often failed to account for the fact that policies have a different impact on women than men, and that the responsiveness and possibilities of women are determined and often limited by gender relations.

12. Since changes in gender relations require structural changes in the society, a long-term perspective needs to be adopted that is compatible with the concept of sustainable development. Furthermore, by highlighting gender roles, policy makers should be able to determine where and how to intervene. One of the main practical outcomes of integrating gender analysis in the planning process is the recognition that unpaid reproductive work, mainly carried out by women, should be seen as a fundamental component of human resource formation and should be distributed with equity between the sexes, the family, the State and the market.

B. Gender in Agenda 21

13. As was the case with the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 45/197, annex, of 21 December 1990), Agenda 21 applies both a mainstreaming and a women alone approach.

14. Chapter 24, entitled "Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development", is entirely focused on women. It contains a set of guidelines on ways of integrating women in the process of sustainable development. A gender approach has been taken in this chapter, including such matters as the sharing of household tasks by men and women on an equal basis (para. 24.3 (d)). The chapter also calls for the analysis of the structural linkages between gender relations, environment and development (para. 24.8 (d)). Emphasis is placed on the conditions necessary for raising the status of women and on the rights of women as human beings involved in development.

15. Similar to other major policy statements, chapter 24 does confer upon women the status of a major societal group; other chapters deal with other perceived major groups, including children, youth and indigenous people. It can be noted that, taken as a group, men are not treated in a specific chapter of Agenda 21, which could imply that mainstream development is inherently male.

16. Of greater significance is the explicit or implicit inclusion of gender concerns in the other chapters of Agenda 21, including a recognition of the

particular value added by women to efforts to achieve sustainable development. For example, women and women's groups, rather than men's groups, are called upon in many instances to take the lead in local environmental protection and other developmental actions, reflecting the demonstrated concerns of women's groups for the issue (see paras. 12.24 (a), 14.17 (a) and 14.91 (b)).

17. Such calls upon women reflect the fact that many environmental problems need to be solved within the existing gender structure since women are now responsible for much of the agricultural subsistence production and household work, including fetching fuel and water. Similarly, in industrial countries affected by toxic waste, women have a major role in selection of consumer products. Women and women's groups are called upon to "facilitate health" (para. 6.31), to receive training in "home and maternal health care" (para. 6.27 (c)(i)) and to manage waste, "particularly household waste" (para. 21.46 (c)). There will be a challenge for women, especially poor women, who already have a double, or triple, burden of carrying out most of the household work, caring for children, sick and elderly in combination with wage labour and/or food production. Implicitly these burdens will have to be shared by men addressed by the application of science and technology.

18. When discussing women, Agenda 21 gives a particular priority to poor women and those in developing countries. For example, in chapter 3 on combating poverty and in chapter 5 on demographic dynamics and sustainability, women-centred, women-managed reproductive health care is called for (see paras. 3.8 (j) and 5.51). Chapter 4, which deals with patterns of unsustainable consumption, emphasized "the significant role played by women and households as consumers and the potential impacts of their combined purchasing power on the economy" (para. 4.27) in order to change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. In this, the relative role of women and men in industrialized countries is largely missing, especially the present role of women in socializing consumption values and their role as consumers. In contrast, chapter 5, entitled "Demographic dynamics and sustainability", focuses on the role of women and women's groups in population programmes, which is less explicit about the role men should play for the success of family planning programmes (see paras. 40-49 below).

19. Agenda 21 demonstrates a strong international will to integrate women fully, and it constitutes an important recognition of the key role that women will have to play in the process of development in order to make it sustainable. In the monitoring of Agenda 21 it will be important to go beyond the traditional insertion of women into the existing development agenda and through the implementation of Agenda 21 to interpret the agenda from a gender perspective. For example, an emphasis in the monitoring of Agenda 21 can be given to the redistribution of work relating to the reproduction function as defined in gender analysis. It would be expected that many activities now exclusively undertaken by women should be progressively transferred and distributed not only between men and women, but also among the family, the State and the market.

20. In order to design successful strategies for sustainable development it will be necessary to gain an understanding of the ways in which gender relations determine the inequitable distribution of and access to resources. It will also be necessary to understand the ways in which gender relations and sets of values, based on gender roles, determine the valuation of contributions to the

development process, as well as what is considered an important contribution and what is not. In order to illustrate this, three examples of gender analysis are presented in the following section, in the fields of poverty, family planning and urbanization.

III. ILLUSTRATIONS OF A GENDER APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

21. The application of gender analysis to issues of sustainable development can be seen in terms of specific problems on which work is under way in connection with the Fourth World Conference on Women and the International Conference on Population and Development. These issues suggest an important gender dimension in the analysis of poverty, urbanization and population growth, which are important aspects of Agenda 21.

A. Poverty and gender

22. Although poverty is a global phenomenon, it is not gender neutral. Women and men tend to experience poverty differently because of their difference in status, and poverty tends to fall more heavily on women, who are in general disadvantaged. However, the strategies recommended for poverty alleviation are not based on an analysis that systematically takes into account gender relations and the way they are biased against women. As stated by the World Bank, attacking poverty is not primarily a task for narrowly focused antipoverty projects, but a task for economic policy at large. 5/ At the same time, it must be recognized that economic policies are not gender neutral and that they affect women and men differently.

23. As noted by the World Bank, various dimensions of access to resources within the family and beyond are affected by gender. 6/ Women are generally among the poorest of the poor because of the unequal access they are accorded on the basis of gender. Cultural norms, also reflected in national legislation, effectively limit women's participation in and access to education, waged labour, health care, legal autonomy and personal freedom. Processes of life-long discrimination against women effectively limit their full participation in the development process. All this sets the stage for a repetition of poverty in subsequent generations.

24. Poverty has important environmental dimensions. The poor often have few options for coping with the risk of starvation other than more intensive extraction of their own or of open-access resources. The impoverished, who are more likely to be women than men, perceive no alternative to over-using resources stocks today even at cost to their livelihood tomorrow. Studies show that uneducated women tend to be less productive, are employed in less well paid jobs and are less able to use their initiative to protect their environment. They are also likely to marry younger and are less likely to use family planning. Women, who perform most of the household work and who are largely responsible for subsistence food production in many regions, frequently have no option but to collect wood despite ensuing deforestation and soil erosion. Alternatively, women may have to compensate for the lack of fuel by preparing less fully cooked food and by not boiling water - the latter essential for

disease prevention, thus creating a deteriorating health situation, which in itself lowers the quality of life and generates poverty. Studies in Nepal have shown that women have to spend so much time looking for wood that their farming activities suffer appreciably. 7/

25. Because of these responsibilities, women are particularly affected by environmental problems such as deforestation, soil degradation, and conditions of poverty resulting in inadequate housing, especially in urban areas, poor sanitation and lack of clean water. Increasingly, time will have to be spent looking for fuel or fetching water. Case-studies have shown that these problems in combination with natural disasters have forced many people, especially women and children, to become "environmental refugees". In Lesotho, for example, where 85 per cent of women are reported to be affected by poverty, 20 per cent of women can be regarded as belonging to environmentally endangered population groups. 8/ If present trends continue, by the year 2000 over one billion people may become "environmental refugees". Unable to make a living from the land, many will flock to the cities.

26. Households are often viewed as units, and it is assumed that income of household members is pooled and spent in such a way as to maximize their joint welfare. However, case-studies from poor and richer countries alike make clear that men and women have differing expenditure priorities. 9/ The distribution of consumption often favours men and income-earning adults. Poor households are more likely to invest in education of boys than girls. While women's income is almost exclusively used to meet collective household needs, men tend to retain a considerable portion of their income for personal spending. Studies in India confirm that female wage workers have a greater say over family resource allocation and household decision-making than women who do not bring in outside income.

27. It has further been found that participation by females in the labour market had a statistically significant positive effect on the energy intake of young children. This indicates that by investing in women the achievement may be twofold: it raises their status by giving them more bargaining power, and their increased income is likely to benefit their dependants. It also indicates that gender roles and legislation need to be changed in such a way that it becomes the desire, obligation and responsibility of both sexes to contribute fully to the welfare of their families and the upbringing of their children.

28. In policy-making in a large number of countries, families are still often assumed to be the traditional two-generational nuclear family consisting of a woman, a man and their children. However, the wide range of family structures must be recognized and taken into account, with special focus on the poor female-headed households. In many developed countries the poorest include large numbers of single-mother households. A large proportion of poor households are headed by women, especially in rural Africa and in the slums of urban Latin America, and the increasing number of female headed households has led to a feminization of poverty.

29. Women living in poverty are competent actors in the development process and in the effective management of scarce resources, but they are often not allowed to perform this task fully. They are in a situation of responsibility without power. Their role as managers of natural resources make them central to

community-based sustainable development. However, this does not imply that only women and women's organizations should be burdened with the task of managing natural resources and providing social services to society. In addition to recognizing women's important role and enabling them to participate fully in the process of sustainable development, the final goal must be equality between women and men and equal distribution of the reproductive, productive, community management and community leadership roles.

30. One of the key issues in effective responses to women's poverty is the empowerment of poor women to rectify the current lack of participation in decision-making. This depends to a great extent on the ability of women's groups to intervene in the interacting operations of State agencies, markets and community networks and institutions by mobilizing, exerting pressure, educating and organizing to strengthen the command of poor women over resources, beginning with command over their own persons and their own labour.

B. Urbanization and gender

31. The major role of women, especially young women, given today's rapid processes of urbanization and increasing migration flows, is striking, and the many problems migrant women face have been highlighted in several recent meetings organized by the United Nations. 10/ In most cities today there are contradictions between sustainability and development: most of the cities that can be judged positively by development criteria (where social, economic and political goals are met) have among the highest per capita draws on environmental capital. Most of the world's cities with the least draw on environmental capital are the ones which perform worst in development terms.

32. During this century, urbanization has become a major ecological driving force involving vast transformations in the use of land, air, water and energy resources and an unprecedented redistribution of human population. Most developing countries have experienced very rapid growth in their urban populations without the needed expansion in the provision of urban infrastructure and services and in the ability to provide safe and adequate shelter. Because of their ascribed gender roles, women, to a much greater extent than men, will have to make up for the absence of these services. This situation, in combination with, for example, lack of education, makes it more difficult for women to look for or seize economic opportunities, which has serious consequences for their ability to support themselves and their families financially.

33. One characteristics of urban women, whether in developed or developing countries, is the double burden they often have to carry, combining housework with income generating work. Urban women's gender roles manifest themselves in three basic patterns, two inside the home and one outside. Urban women constitute an "invisible urban support structure". Since they have to make up for the lack of public support services and social network, they allocate most of their time to reproductive work and community management work in the home and in the neighbourhood. Because of this, urban women are likely to do productive work at home, for example, as unpaid labourers in family-based production, or near home in the informal sector. Finally, if they seek employment outside the home, as is often the case of young, single migrant women, the above patterns

are likely to be reproduced in the types of jobs available to them, such as domestic or generally unqualified, labour-intensive and under-paid jobs.

34. Women's reproductive work is neither recognized as work, nor is it given an economic value. Women's needs are rarely given priority in government provided services, and there is a frequent lack of housing programmes, provision of health clinics, child-care centres or transportation (which is generally scheduled to serve the needs of the income earners). Governments have also been known, for example, to tear down squatter settlements or make collection of wood for fuel in the urban areas illegal, without providing any other solutions for poor urban people, and especially poor urban women, who are struggling for the survival of their families. Making wood collection illegal might seem necessary in a country with rapid deforestation, such as, for example, Ethiopia, but it was found that such a policy forced the above 73,000 urban women and children in Addis Ababa to earn their livelihood illegally, by collecting and selling fuelwood to the city dwellers, in order to survive. 11/

35. Urban poverty has become particularly problematic in countries undergoing structural adjustment programmes, with women generally the worst affected. Elimination of food subsidies, falling wages and rising prices reduce women's spending power and they must spend more time finding ways to satisfy their family's hunger, travelling farther to cheaper shops or markets. Thus, a decreasing family income increases the time that urban women have to spend on unpaid work, and the financial cuts in social services, education and health schemes add to their overwork. The more time a woman has to spend on household work, the less time is left for income generating work, and the situation might eventually reach the breaking point for poor urban woman heads of household.

36. The increasing number of female headed households in the urban areas are also among the poorest of the poor and therefore more exposed to environmental hazards. Indeed, poor women in urban areas face a threefold threat to their health. Because of their role in childbearing, their capacity to earn an income is diminished by their reproductive role. Female headed households therefore frequently live in the most environmentally hazardous areas, for example, close to polluting industries. Second, since girls and women are largely responsible for water and fuel collection, they suffer the most if supplies are contaminated or difficult to obtain. Finally, if biomass fuels or coal are used for cooking and/or heating on open fires, girls and women inhale larger concentrations of pollutants over longer periods of time.

37. The inevitable urbanization of the developing world provides major policy challenges for the management and development of population policy, provision of infrastructure and welfare. These policy challenges must be taken up as a matter of urgency. Planners should focus on improving the situation for urban dwellers by assisting them to improve their own situation as well as by providing services.

38. Among the most important measures would be to enable women to participate fully in urban management. At first this might have to be done within the existing gender structure, but always with a view to empowering women and changing the gender roles. As the initial step, policies should be directed at empowering poor urban women to improve their own situation by introducing

services that will enable them to take advantage of economic opportunities within the urban economy.

39. However, in the long run, measures will have to be taken to distribute the reproductive work between the sexes and the private and public actors in the urban centres. This would require support systems for parents in the formal sector, opening non-traditional economic activities or fields of training to women, equal access to education and policies combating discriminatory attitudes in society, the working world and the family (see CEDAW/C/1992/6). Among other important policies to combat discriminatory attitudes in society would be the elimination of stereotyping of women and men in mass media and in teaching materials in schools.

C. Gender and family planning

40. The ability for women to control their fertility and choose the number and spacing of children is widely considered a crucial factor for raising the status of women and for improving the health of women and their children and their economic situation. At the same time it is important to recognize that while limiting population growth may be one factor in achieving sustainable natural resource use, it cannot be considered in isolation from other influences that determine access to and use of natural resources.

41. There are strong links among gender, poverty, population and the environment. Minimal education and limited income-earning possibilities of poorer women lower the costs of foregone economic opportunities while the women bear and raise children. Poor parents often need more children to provide for their old-age security and to provide labour. Environmental degradation appears to reinforce links between poverty and high fertility. Degradation of land resources worked by women reduces the women's productivity and the economic advantage of working the land. Degradation of tree, pasture, and drinking water resources increases the time needed for fuel-wood gathering, livestock pasturing, and water fetching - traditionally women's tasks, but also tasks that children can do, thereby increasing children's value to parents. These links are stronger in areas where female fertility is already high.

42. While studies have shown that more equitable distribution of resources in a society, better access to education and health for both sexes, low infant mortality and measures taken to raise the status of women can lead to reduced fertility, these issues are not addressed in family planning programmes. Economic development in tandem with distribution of resources and the political will to raise the status of women are important factors for reduced fertility in the long run. Although this has been recognized in theory, it has only been translated into practice to a limited extent in the delivery of family planning services. Far too often programmes still operate in a "gender-vacuum", to a great extent ignoring the underlying factors that cause women to voluntarily or involuntarily give birth to many children, thus attempting to cure rather than prevent. Further, men are not addressed by family planning programmes to the same extent as women, and are more often sceptical about these programmes. Therefore, family planning programmes would benefit from taking on a much broader approach, based on gender analysis. Equality between men and women in the access to family planning is stressed in the World Population Plan of

Action, adopted at the United Nations World Population Conference, held at Bucharest in 1974, 12/ as well as in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 13/ and in article 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180).

43. Few women in the world today can exercise their basic human right to decide freely and informedly on the number and spacing of their children, or indeed even to influence the size of their families: men and women are not equal partners in decision-making, whether at the family level or the national level. Since women are valued mainly as mothers and wives in many cultures, the age at marriage is often very low, and the first pregnancy occurs at an early age, when the woman is neither physically nor psychologically prepared for having children. Women's lack of control over their bodies and over sexual contracts often leads to early sexual initiation, early and frequent pregnancies and great exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. 14/ Untreated sexually transmitted diseases can easily cause infertility, which is a major problem for women in many countries.

44. Early pregnancies and continued births throughout the productive years, with or without emotional, practical and financial support from the father, leave many women in an economically dependent position, from youth to old age. Family planning programmes tend to overlook not only the gender dimension of family planning, but also the age perspective; the different stages of a woman's life that determine her possibilities to make decisions related to fertility. Family planning programmes need to look into ways of intervening at all stages of a woman's life cycle, improving the status of women in a life-course approach, providing sex education for girls and boys, and counteracting such situations as the low age at marriage, lack of education and higher level of economic dependence of girls and women.

45. Until recently, family planning programmes were often accused of blaming poverty on women's fertility. Lately however, a consensus seems to have been reached that the desire to control the number and spacing of children is almost universal among all women, regardless of economic or social position. The focus has shifted to stressing the importance of increasing women's access to information and services related to family planning. Family planning programmes have also been criticized for taking on too much of a top-down approach towards women, by not involving women enough in the planning and implementation process.

46. Other criticisms include lack of information and respect, lack of attention to user satisfaction, lack of involvement of users in the designing of programmes, using women as "guinea pigs" for new birth control methods, insufficient contraceptive research, sterilization and a lack of proper health precautions regarding use of IUDs, information or after-care. Top-down approaches in family planning policies and programmes, based on "cost-benefit" types of calculations of various risks for women depending on the contraceptive method used, are not compatible with a development strategy based on human rights and respect for the individuals concerned.

47. There has been a trend towards making birth control more "woman centred", thus absolving men of their responsibilities for fertility control and placing the burden increasingly on women. It is assumed that since women are the ones

giving birth, they have the full responsibility for protecting themselves against unwanted pregnancies, a pattern which is the same in industrialized and developing countries. However, while women are given the main responsibility for protecting themselves against unwanted pregnancies, many women do not have the choice of whether to use a contraceptive or not, owing to their gender subordination coupled with poverty, cultural and religious norms as well as lack of access to and information about contraceptive methods.

48. The empowerment of women has not been stressed enough in family planning programmes. Programmes tend to be carried out within existing gender roles, rather than attempting to promote equality between the sexes, thus running the risk of being less effective in the long run. Women are still perceived to be passively waiting to benefit from policies and programmes, when in fact in reality they are far from passive, but rather blocked by their lower status and poverty from participating fully in the development process, including making decisions regarding their own fertility. Family planning programmes should attempt to involve and empower women and men to participate actively in the designing and implementation of such programmes. Shifting from a couple to an individual perspective by involving men is today one of the major ideas in the promotion of equality and effective family planning. Information on contraceptives, including the wide range of those available, should be more widely distributed, and technologies themselves better adapted and based on women's and men's experiences.

49. In order to be effective in the long run, family planning programmes should not only focus on attempting to reduce fertility within existing gender roles, but rather on changing existing gender roles in order to reduce fertility. While this has to some extent been recognized in policy documents, it is less visible in the implementation of family planning programmes. This will mean involving girls and boys, women and men at all stages in their lives, using a life-course approach, in order to empower women and men to gain control over their lives and their fertility. It will also involve changing the culturally set gender roles for women and men into a more balanced sharing of reproductive, productive and community management and leadership roles between the sexes. It will require coordination between family planning programmes, Governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as the political will to raise the status of women.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

50. A condition for achieving sustainable development is the advancement of women, which in turn requires reshaping of the development agenda so that it is based on an understanding of how equality between women and men might improve the functioning of all areas of social, political and economic life and the global environment. This must be done through the self-empowerment of women, a process in which women gain control over their own lives through a process of knowing their rights and claiming those rights at all levels of society at the international, the national and the household levels. This involves modifying the gender roles of men and a redistribution of the reproductive and productive work so that it is shared evenly between the sexes and public and private actors.

51. Agenda 21 contains an important recognition that women play a determining role in this process. During the review and monitoring of Agenda 21, both explicit and implicit gender factors can be utilized to strengthen implementation of the Agenda at all levels.

52. A prerequisite for effective review and monitoring is the development of realistic, usable and understandable indicators of progress towards sustainable development. The development of these indicators should be based on a thorough understanding of gender relations in a society and the ways in which such relations influence environmental concerns. It would be desirable at an early stage to agree upon and include a set of indicators in the review of Agenda 21 that would indicate progress in the advancement of women. In order to fully understand the links between gender and sustainable development, research should be conducted on the influence of gender on the complex interaction between environmental factors and socio-economic factors. They could include the links between gender, access to education and paid work, the distribution of resources, health and the environment.

53. It is important to take a gender approach in the review of all the issues dealt with in Agenda 21. It has been suggested (see E/CN.17/1993/2) that the Commission for Sustainable Development should review the implementation of the chapters of Agenda 21 in nine broad clusters, and that five of the clusters, including that of "Roles of major groups" (chaps. 23-32), should be reviewed together annually. Since the roles of women and men and of girls and boys in sustainable development span the clusters, the Commission should, in addition to analysing the role of major groups, use gender analysis as a general framework for the review of Agenda 21, especially for the overall review which is planned to take place in 1997, in order to prepare for the proposed special session of the General Assembly in that year. This review should also benefit from the analysis leading up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the conclusions emerging from it.

54. The idea that the role of men in sustainable development is as important as the role of women should be taken into account in the monitoring process. This would give an opportunity to examine how men's roles could be modified to facilitate sustainable development. Indeed, no sustainable development can be obtained without a change in men's gender roles, as well as women's.

55. By its resolution 1993/12, the Economic and Social Council urged the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Advisory Board to develop appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the objectives and activities relating to the role of women in sustainable development are supported, the objectives met and activities and other recommended actions implemented, and that Governments and all relevant United Nations entities monitor and report on the subject. An effort can be made by the Secretariat to propose how this can best be done.

Notes

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8), resolution 1, annex II.

2/ World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 8.

3/ Diane Elson. Male bias in the development process (Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 1.

4/ Report of the Seminar on the Integration of Women in Development, Vienna, 9-11 December 1991, p. 5.

5/ World Bank, World Development Report 1990: Poverty, p. 4.

6/ World Bank, Gender and poverty in India (Washington, D.C., 1991), p. 1.

7/ UNFPA, Population, Resources and the Environment, The Critical Challenges (New York, 1991), p. 69.

8/ See Filomina Chioma Steady (ed.), National Reports. Selected Case Studies on the Role of Women in Sustainable Development.

9/ Diane Elson. Male bias in the development process (Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 183.

10/ See, for example, reports from the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Feminization of International Migration, held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, 22-25 October 1991; the UNESCO International Seminar on Migrant Women in the 1990s, held in Barcelona, Spain, 26-29 January 1992 and the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International Migration Policies and the Status of Female Migrants, held in San Miniato, Italy, 27-30 March 1990.

11/ A. Rodda. Women and the Environment (London, Zed Books Ltd., 1991), p. 49-50.

12/ Report of the United Nations World Population Conference, Bucharest, 19-30 August 1974 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.XIII.3), chap. I.

13/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

14/ For an extensive discussion on this topic, see Jacques du Guerny and Elisabeth Sjöberg, "Inter-relationship Between Gender Relations and the HIV/AIDS-epidemic: some possible considerations for policies and programmes", AIDS (London, Current Science), forthcoming.